

Guidelines for Reconstructing Cultural Landscapes

RECONSTRUCT NON-SURVIVING LANDSCAPES
Research and Document Historical Significance

Recommended

Researching and documenting the property's historical significance, focusing on the availability of documentary and physical evidence needed to justify reconstruction of the non-surviving cultural landscape.

Not Recommended

Undertaking a reconstruction based on insufficient research so that, an historically inaccurate cultural landscape is created.

Reconstructing a cultural landscape unnecessarily when an existing landscape adequately reflects or explains the history of the property, the historical event, or has the same associative value.

Executing a design for the landscape that was never constructed historically.

Investigate Archeological Resources

Investigating archeological resources to identify and evaluate the spatial organization and land patterns which are essential to the design and/or layout of the landscape.

Failing to identify and evaluate archeological information prior to reconstruction, or destroying extant historical information not relevant to the reconstruction which should be preserved in place.

Minimizing ground disturbance to reduce the possibility of destroying archeological resources.

Operating heavy machinery or equipment in areas where it may disturb archeological resources.

Identify, Protect and Preserve Extant Historic Features

Identifying, protecting and preserving extant historic features of the cultural landscape such as remnants of structures, field patterns, or walkways.

Beginning reconstruction work without first conducting a detailed site investigation to physically substantiate the documentary evidence.

Basing a reconstruction on conjectural designs or different features from other cultural landscapes.

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION AND LAND PATTERNS

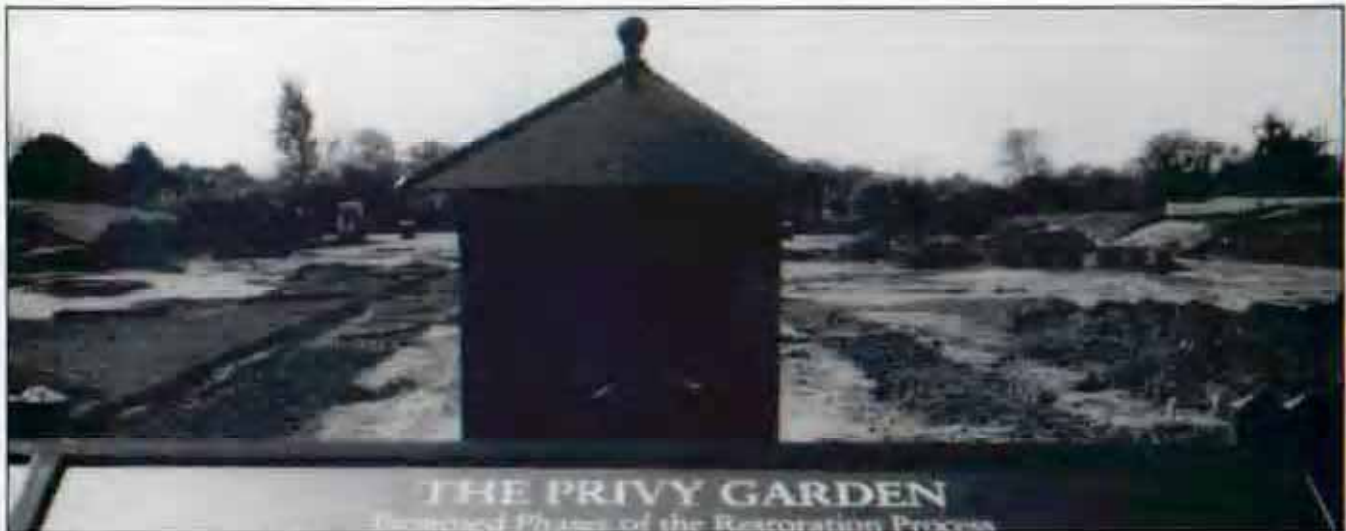
Reconstructing the historic spatial organization or land patterns, including the size, configuration, proportion and relationship of landscape units; relationship of features to landscape units; and the landscape units themselves. For example, recreating a historic farmstead by reconstructing all of its buildings, structures, furnishings and objects to accurately convey the historic spatial organization and land patterns.

Altering the documented spatial organization or land patterns or relocating extant features so that the historic relationship between the feature and the landscape unit is inaccurately depicted. For example, relocating a statue along an estate's main access after it was recovered from an off-site location.

TOPOGRAPHY

Reconstructing a non-surviving topographic feature to depict the documented historic appearance.

Reconstructing topographic features that cannot be documented historically or for which inadequate documentation exists.



The Privy Garden at Hampton Court U.K. was originally designed for King William III in 1702. By the mid-nineteenth century, William and Mary's "broderie" had completely disappeared. Since that time, the formal garden laid out for William III had provided an informal and shady retreat for visitors. As the scholarly basis for the reconstruction, archeology revealed the outlines of the garden, [top and middle] and was coupled with extensive research into the original planting design. The work included the propagation of original holly and yews to allow for in-kind replacement, [bottom and following page]. All non-original vegetation from the garden (e.g. relocating trees of horticultural importance from later designs to an off-site nursery) was removed. (author, 1994 and 1995)

VEGETATION

Reconstructing a non-surviving vegetation feature to depict the documented historic appearance. Although historic genus, species and cultivar are preferable, substitute materials may be used as long as they recreate the historic appearance—namely, habit, form, color, texture, bloom, fruit, fragrance, scale and context. For example, reestablishing a lost corn field using a contemporary cultivar having the same habit and growth cycle.

Reconstructing vegetation features that cannot be documented historically or for which inadequate documentation exists. For example, installing a "period" herb garden.

Using substitute materials that do not convey the appearance of the historic vegetation.

Not reconstructing a documented vegetation feature; or replanting a feature but altering its historic appearance.

Failing to identify and interpret the reconstruction of a lost vegetation feature, thus confusing the public understanding.

CIRCULATION

Reconstructing a non-surviving circulation feature to depict the documented historic appearance. Although traditional materials such as masonry, wood, and cinders are preferable, substitute materials may be used as long as they recreate the historical appearance. For example, utilizing a color pigmented concrete with a brushed finish to recreate a swept path.

Reconstructing circulation features that cannot be documented historically or for which inadequate documentation exists.

Using substitute materials that do not convey the appearance of the cultural landscape.

Not reconstructing a documented circulation feature; or rebuilding a feature but altering its historic design.

Using inappropriate alignment, surface treatment, width, edge, grade, materials or infrastructure that do not convey the historic appearance.



WATER FEATURES

Reconstructing a non-surviving water feature to depict the documented historic appearance. Although traditional materials are preferable, substitute materials may be used as long as they recreate the historical appearance. For example, utilizing contemporary masonry units to re-create a stone-lined boat basin.

Reconstructing water features that cannot be documented historically or for which inadequate documentation exists.

Using substitute materials that do not convey the appearance of the cultural landscape.

Not reconstructing a documented water feature, or rebuilding a feature but altering its historic design.

Using inappropriate shape, edge and bottom condition/ materials, or water level, movement, sound, and reflective quality that do not convey the historic appearance.

STRUCTURES, FURNISHINGS AND OBJECTS

Reconstructing a non-surviving structure, furnishing or object to depict the documented historic appearance. Although traditional materials such as masonry, wood, and architectural metals are preferable, substitute materials may be used as long as they recreate the historical appearance. For example, recreating a stone perimeter wall using a poured concrete core and stone facing.

Reconstructing a structure, furnishing and object that cannot be documented historically or for which inadequate documentation exists.

Using substitute materials that do not convey the original appearance of the cultural landscape.

Interpret the Reconstructed Landscape

Using signs or interpretive markers to identify the building, structure, furnishing or object as a contemporary re-creation. For example, installing new signage along a historic motorway, to identify the reconstruction of a scenic overlook.

Failing to identify and interpret the reconstruction of a structure, furnishing or object as a re-creation, thus confusing the public understanding.

Whereas preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration treatments usually necessitate retrofitting to meet code and energy requirements, in this treatment it is assumed that the reconstructed landscape will be essentially new construction. Thus, only minimal guidance is provided in the following section, although the work must still be assessed for its potential negative impact on the reconstructed landscape.

ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Taking accessibility requirements into consideration early in the planning stage so that barrier-free access can be provided in a way that is compatible with the reconstruction.

Obscuring or damaging the appearance of the reconstructed landscape in the process of providing barrier-free access.

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Considering health and safety code requirements early in the planning stage of the project so that work is compatible with the reconstruction. For example, the installation of fire suppression systems or seismic retrofits.

Meeting health and safety requirements without considering their visual impact on the reconstruction.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Taking environmental protection requirements into consideration early in the planning stage so that desirable environmental conditions can be provided in a way that is compatible with the reconstruction. For example, re-establishing a wetland to comply with applicable environmental regulations, while recreating the feature as it appeared historically.

Obscuring or damaging the appearance of the reconstructed landscape in the process of providing environmental protection.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Considering energy efficiency requirements, such as passive solar functions or water conservation methods, early in the planning stage of the project so that work is incorporated into the reconstruction.

Obscuring or damaging the appearance of the reconstructed landscape in the process of providing energy efficiency.